

Respiratory Protection Program

1.0 Purpose

The (Squad Name) has determined that members on the emergency squad may be exposed to respiratory hazards during routine operations. These include biological hazards, such as SARS, Anthrax, Smallpox, etc. The purpose of this program is to ensure that all (Squad Name) members are protected from exposure to these respiratory hazards.

It is the policy of the (Squad Name) to maintain comprehensive occupational safety and health programs based upon sound engineering, education, and enforcement. This document establishes policy, responsibilities, and requirements for the protection of (Squad Name) members whose job requires the use of respiratory protection.

2.0 Scope and Application

This program applies to all members who are required to wear respirators during emergency squad operations. This includes all members of the (Squad Name). All members working in these areas and engaged in certain processes or tasks must be enrolled in the (Squad Name) respirator protection program.

Members participating in the respiratory protection program do so at no cost to them. The expense associated with training, medical evaluations and respiratory protection equipment will be borne by the squad or the Township of XXX. Please refer to **Appendix I** for the complete PEOSH Respiratory Protection Standard – 29CFR1910.134.

3.0 Responsibilities

Program Administrator

The Program Administrator is responsible for administering the respiratory protection program. Duties of the program administrator include:

- Identifying work areas, processes or tasks that require workers to wear respirators, and evaluating hazards.
- Selection of respiratory protection options.
- Monitoring respirator use to ensure that respirators are used in accordance with their certifications.
- Arranging for and/or conducting training.
- Ensuring proper storage and maintenance of respiratory protection equipment.
- Arranging and providing for qualitative fit testing.
- Administering the medical surveillance program.

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- Maintaining records required by the program.
- Evaluating the program.
- Updating written program, as needed.

The Program Administrator for the (Squad Name) is (Contact name) of the (Squad Name).

Chief

The Chief is responsible for ensuring that the respiratory protection program is implemented in their particular areas. In addition to being knowledgeable about the program requirements for his/her own protection, the Chief must also ensure that the program is understood and followed by the members under their charge. Duties of the Chief include:

- Ensuring that members under their supervision (including new members) have received appropriate training, fit testing, and annual medical evaluation.
- Ensuring the availability of appropriate respirators and accessories.
- Being aware of tasks requiring the use of respiratory protection.
- Enforcing the proper use of respiratory protection when necessary.
- Ensuring that respirators are properly cleaned, maintained, and stored according to the respiratory protection plan.
- Ensuring that respirators fit well and do not cause discomfort.
- Continually monitoring work areas and operations to identify respiratory hazards.
- Coordinating with the Program Administrator on how to address respiratory hazards or other concerns regarding the program.

(Squad Name) Members

Each member has the responsibility to wear their respirator when and where required and in the manner in which they were trained. Members must also:

- Care for and maintain their respirators as instructed, and store them in a clean sanitary location.
- Inform the Program Administrator if the respirator no longer fits well, and request a new one that fits properly.
- Inform the Chief or Program Administrator of any respiratory hazards that they feel are not adequately addressed and of any other concerns that they have regarding the program.
- Completing the mandatory medical questionnaire and any medical evaluation requirements deemed necessary by the evaluating physician.
- Wearing respiratory protection devices in conjunction with all requirements of this policy (e.g., no facial hair).

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- Attending annual respirator training and fit testing; and
- Maintaining, cleaning and inspecting respiratory protection devices in accordance with this policy.

4.0 Program Elements

Selection Procedures

The Program Administrator will select respirators to be used on site, based on the hazards to which members are exposed and in accordance with all PEOSH standards. The Program Administrator or Chief will conduct a hazard evaluation for each operation, process, or work area where airborne contaminants may be present in routine operations or during an emergency.

The Program Administrator shall identify and evaluate respiratory hazard(s) in the workplace. This evaluation shall include a reasonable estimate of employee exposures to respiratory hazard(s) and an identification of the contaminant's chemical state and physical form. Where employee exposure cannot be identified or reasonably estimated, the atmosphere shall be considered to be immediately dangerous to life and health (IDLH).

The Program Administrator shall recommend an appropriate National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) certified respirator based on the respiratory hazard(s) to which the worker is exposed and workplace and user factors that affect respirator performance and reliability. The respirator shall be adequate to protect the health of the employee and ensure compliance with all other OSHA requirements under routine and reasonably foreseeable emergency situations.

To date, the (Squad Name) membership has determined along with the Program Administrator that the hazards that most likely would be encountered on a medical response call would be of biological in nature (i.e. TB, SARS, Anthrax, Smallpox). Therefore, the respirator of choice under this program will be an N100 respirator or an N95 respirator, if a member is not able to have an adequate fit with an N100.

Updating the Hazard Assessment

The Program Administrator must revise and update the hazard assessment as needed (i.e., any time work process changes may potentially affect exposure). If a member feels that respiratory protection is needed during a particular activity, they are to contact the Chief or Program Administrator.

The Program Administrator will evaluate the potential hazard, arranging for outside assistance as necessary. The Program Administrator will then communicate the results of that assessment back to the members. If it is

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determined that respiratory protection is necessary, all other elements of this program will be in effect for those tasks and this program will be updated accordingly.

NIOSH Certification

All respirators must be certified by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and shall be used in accordance with the terms of that certification.

Medical Evaluation

Members who are required to wear respirators must pass a medical evaluation before being permitted to wear a respirator on the job. Members are not permitted to wear respirators until a physician has determined that they are medically able to do so. Any member refusing the medical evaluation will not be allowed to respond to any call or work in an area-requiring a respirator. Medical evaluation procedures are as follows:

1. The medical evaluation will be conducted using the questionnaire provided in Appendix I or a questionnaire supplied by a certifying agency of the respiratory protection standard. The Program Administrator will provide a copy of this questionnaire to all members requiring medical evaluations.
2. All members will be given a copy of the medical questionnaire to fill out.
3. Follow-up medical exams will be granted to members as required by the standard, and/or as deemed necessary by a licensed physician.
4. The Program Administrator will provide the physician with a copy of this program, a copy of the Respiratory Protection Standard, and the members name. Additionally, he/she shall also provide the following information prior to making a recommendation concerning a member's ability to use a respirator:
 - The type and weight of the respirator to be used by the employee;
 - The duration and frequency of respirator use (including use for rescue and escape);
 - The expected physical work effort;
 - Additional protective clothing and equipment to be worn;
 - Temperature and humidity extremes that may be encountered;
5. After a member has received clearance and begun to wear their respirator, additional medical evaluations will be provided under the following circumstances:
 - The member reports signs and/or symptoms relating to their ability to use a respirator, such as shortness of breath, dizziness, chest pains, or wheezing;

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- The evaluating physician or Chief informs the Program Administrator that the member needs to be reevaluated;
- Information from this program, including observations made during fit testing and program evaluation, indicates a need for reevaluation;
- A change occurs in workplace conditions that may result in an increased physiological burden on the member;
- A list of (Squad Name) members currently included in medical surveillance is provided under Respiratory Use of this program;
- All examinations and questionnaires are to remain confidential between the member and the physician.

Fit Testing

Before a member may be required to use any respirator with a negative or positive pressure tight-fitting face piece, the employee shall be fit tested with the same make, model, style and size of respirator that will be used.

The (Squad Name) shall conduct and ensure employees pass an appropriate qualitative fit test (QLFT). Fit testing shall be conducted prior to initial use of the respirator, whenever a different respirator face piece (e.g., size, style, model, make) is used and at least annually thereafter.

An additional fit test shall be conducted whenever any of the following occurs:

- Significant weight change (20 pounds or more);
- Significant facial scarring in the area of the face piece seal;
- Significant dental changes;
- Reconstructive or cosmetic surgery; or
- Other conditions that may interfere with the face piece seal.

If after passing a QLFT, the member subsequently notifies the Chief or Program Administrator that the fit of the respirator is unacceptable, the member shall be given a reasonable opportunity to select a different respirator face piece and be retested.

Fit testing will be conducted by (Squad Name) or another agency as required using the OSHA accepted fit testing protocols (**see Appendix II**).

Respirator Use

Respiratory protection is required for all personnel who may, after a scene size up, determine that they may be in a biological hazard environment.

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General Use Procedures:

Members will use their respirators under conditions specified by this program, and in accordance with the training they receive on the use of each particular model. In addition, the respirator shall not be used in a manner for which it is not certified by NIOSH or by its manufacturer.

All members' shall conduct user seal checks each time that they wear their respirator. Members shall use either the positive or negative pressure check (depending on which test works best for them) specified in **Appendix III** of the Respiratory Protection Program.

Members are not permitted to wear tight-fitting respirators if they have any condition, such as facial scars, facial hair, or missing dentures, that prevents them from achieving a good seal. Members are not permitted to wear headphones, jewelry, or other articles that may interfere with the face piece-to-face seal.

If a member wears corrective glasses or goggles or other personal protective equipment, it shall be worn in a manner that does not interfere with the seal of the face piece to the face seal of the user.

Routine and Emergency Use Procedures:

Members shall leave the respirator use area for the following reasons:

- To wash their faces as necessary to prevent eye or skin irritation associated with respirator use;
- If they detect a breakthrough, changes in breathing resistance or leakage of the face piece; or
- To replace the respirator.

If a member detects a breakthrough, changes in breathing resistance or leakage of the face piece, the respirator shall be replaced or repaired prior to returning to the work area.

Maintenance & Inspection

Respirators are to be properly maintained at all times in order to ensure that they function properly and adequately protect (Squad Name) members. Maintenance involves a thorough visual inspection for cleanliness and defects. If a member determines that the N95 or N100 respirator is not adequate, it should be discarded.

Respirators used on a routine basis shall be inspected before each use.

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The following checklist will be used when inspecting respirators:

- Face piece: cracks, tears, or holes; or facemask distortion;
- Head straps: breaks or tears; broken buckles

Change Schedules

Members wearing N95 or N100 masks shall change the respirator after completing a call with a potential patient with a respiratory hazard or when they first begin to experience difficulty breathing (i.e., resistance) while wearing their masks.

Storage

Respirators must be stored in a clean, dry area, and in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Each member will inspect their own N95 or N100 in accordance with the provisions of this program and will store their respirator as per manufacturer's recommendations. Each member will have his or her name on his/her assigned respirator. The Program Administrator will store the respirators in their original manufacturer's packaging in the equipment storage room located at the (Squad Name).

Defective Respirators

Respirators that are defective or have defective parts shall be taken out of service immediately. If, during an inspection, a member discovers a defect in a respirator, they are to bring the defect to the attention of the Chief. The Chief will give all defective respirators to the Program Administrator. The Program Administrator will decide whether to:

- Perform a simple fix on the spot such as replacing a head strap.
- Dispose of the respirator due to an irreparable problem or defect.

Training

The Program Administrator will provide or arrange training to (Squad Name) members regarding Respiratory Protection Program and their responsibilities under it, and on the PEOSH Respiratory Protection Standard. Workers will be trained prior to using a respirator.

The training course will cover the following topics:

- The (Squad Name) Respiratory Protection Program
- The PEOSH Respiratory Protection Standard

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- Respiratory hazards that may be encountered during a response and their health effects
- Proper selection and use of respirators
- Limitations of respirators
- Respirator donning and user seal (fit) checks
- Fit testing
- Emergency use procedures
- Maintenance and storage
- Medical signs and symptoms limiting the effective use of respirators

Members will be retrained annually or as needed (e.g., if they change departments and need to use a different respirator). Members must demonstrate their understanding of the topics covered in the training through hands-on exercises. The Program Administrator will document respirator training and the documentation will include the type, model, and size of respirator for which each member has been trained and fit tested.

5.0 Program Evaluation

The Program Administrator will conduct periodic evaluations of (Squad Name) member's response to ensure that the provisions of this program are being implemented. The evaluations will include regular consultations with members who use respirators, site inspections, air monitoring and a review of records.

Problems identified will be noted and corrected.

6.0 Documentation and Recordkeeping

A written copy of this program and the Respiratory Protection Standard is kept in the Line Officer's office and is available to all members who wish to review it. Also maintained in the office are copies of training and fit test records. These records will be updated as new members are trained, as existing members receive refresher training, and as new fit tests are conducted.

The Program Administrator will also maintain copies of the respiratory protection records for all members. The completed medical questionnaire and the physician's documented findings are confidential and will remain at the physician's office. The (Squad Name) will only retain the written recommendation regarding each member's ability to wear a respirator.

Medical Evaluations

Records of medical evaluations shall be retained by the (Squad Name) for the duration of membership and 30 years thereafter.

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Fit Test Records

The (Squad Name) ES shall retain all copies of the Fit Test Record until the next fit test is administered.